

# Rainbow Starfrontlet *Coeligena iris* in Huascarán National Park, Ancash, Peru

by C. Steven Sevillano Ríos

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On 14 June 2007 two Rainbow Starfrontlets *Coeligena iris* were mist-netted in *Polylepis weberbaueri* forest at Quebrada Aquillpo (09°20'48.66"S, 77°28'48.90"W; 4,016 m), Huascarán National Park, Ancash, Peru. Both were caught at c.18.00 h while the mist-nets were being closed. One was dead in the net, and the other was weighed, measured and released. Individual 1 (Fig. 1): collected, total length 139 mm, bill 34 mm, wing 80 mm, rectrix 1 36.5 mm, rectrix 5 48.0 mm; individual 2: released, total length 141 mm, bill 34.45 mm, wing 77.35 mm, tarsus 9.06 mm. Comparing these morphometrics with those in Sánchez (2003), both were probably subadult males (*C. Sánchez pers. comm.*). On 21 November 2008, another *C. iris* was observed in *P. weberbaueri* forest at Quebrada Llanganuco (09°04'50.12"S, 77°39'13.96"W; 3,750 m), and on 8 May 2010, two were photographed at Quebrada Aquillpo.

These are the first documented records of *C. iris* in Huascarán National Park to be published, and come from much higher elevations than were previously reported for the species (1,300–3,300 m: Schulenberg *et al.* 2010). Birdwatchers have regularly recorded the species at Llanganuco since the late 1990s, but none published their observations or ascertained which subspecies was involved.

*C. iris* has a fragmented distribution, from southern Ecuador to the northern Peruvian Andes (Sánchez 2003; Fig. 2). The geographically proximate subspecies is *C. i. eva*, whose diagnostic characters such as the absence of black on the neck and upper back, the lack of a violet throat patch, and well-developed olive tips to the rectrices (Sánchez 2003) were evident in the birds at Huascarán.

Why has this hummingbird been largely overlooked in Huascarán National Park by previous surveys? I speculate that Rainbow Starfrontlet is present at low densities and only patchily distributed in the Cordillera Blanca. During 2007–09, I surveyed ten different localities and only recorded *C. i. eva* at Aquillpo and Llanganuco (Sevillano *et al.* 2011). Aquillpo has c.110 ha of *P. weberbaueri* and *P. sericea* forest (with trees up to 16 m tall). Other dominant flora includes *Buddleja incana*, *Gynoxys* sp., *Oreocallis grandiflora* and the



Figure 1. Rainbow Starfrontlet *Coeligena iris*, Aquillpo, Huascarán National Park, Ancash, Peru, June 2007 (C. Steven Sevillano Ríos)

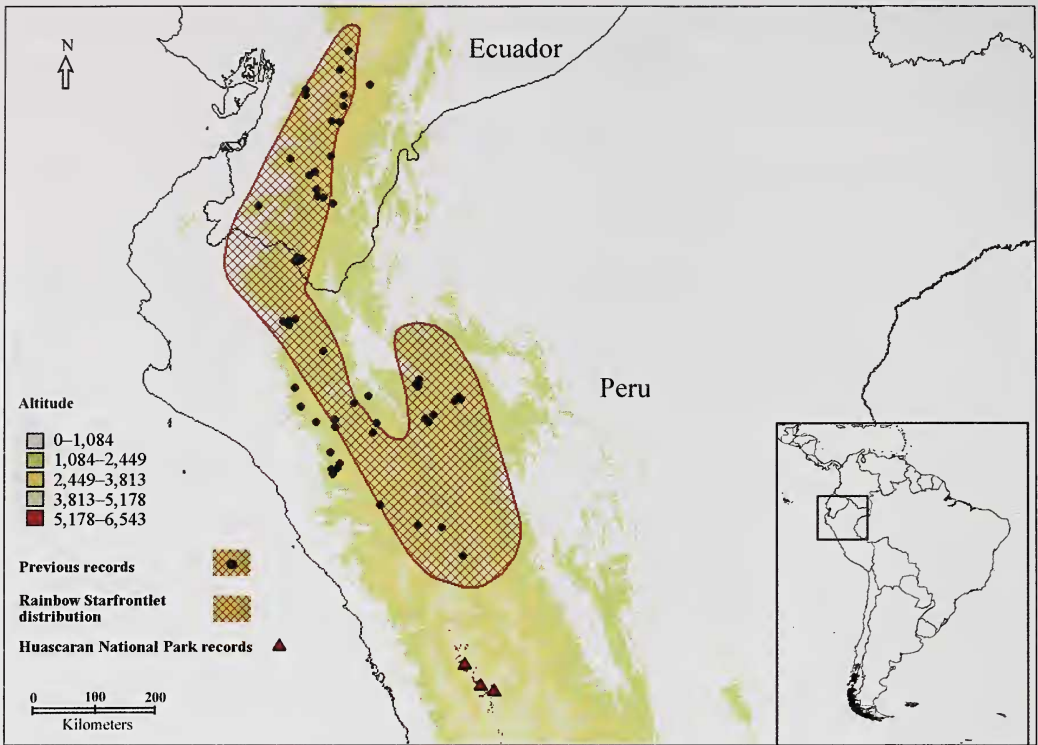


Figure 2. Map showing current Rainbow Starfrontlet *Coeligena iris* distribution, with previous records mainly from Sánchez (2003). The three triangular points correspond to the records from Llanganuco (northernmost) and Aquilpo and Rurichinchay (southernmost), in Huascarán National Park, Ancash.

parasite *Tristerix longibracteatus*. *P. weberbaueri* is also abundant at Llanganuco and the forest extensive as well; other trees and woody plants in the same area include *Alnus* spp., *Passiflora* spp., *Puya angusta*, *Berberis* spp. and abundant bromeliads (*Tillandsia* spp.).

*C. iris* is currently known from Ancash (Schulenberg *et al.* 2010) based on an unpublished specimen collected by M. Koepcke at Llanganuco on 7 August 1960 (T. S. Schulenberg pers. comm.). Frimer & Nielsen (1989) mentioned one of the few published reports of the species in the region, a single individual at Rurichinchay in 1988; consequently, Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990) stated that *C. iris* might occur in Huascarán National Park, but questioned whether it was a vagrant. Fjeldså (1987) and Barrio (2002) failed to find it too.

The records presented here indicate that *C. i. eva* is resident at a few localities in the Cordillera Blanca. These represent the highest elevational records and the southernmost limit of the species' distribution. Further study of the Huascarán population could yield important insights into the taxonomy of the *C. iris* complex (Sánchez 2003).

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## First Uruguayan records of Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*

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Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera* comprises two subspecies, of which *P. m. gouldi* (Grey-faced Petrel) is endemic to New Zealand. The near-circumpolar *P. m. macroptera* breeds in the Southern Hemisphere, including the Atlantic (on Tristan da Cunha and Gough), Indian (Prince Edward, Marion, the Crozets and Kerguelen) and Pacific Oceans (southern Australia and northern New Zealand). Post-breeding, it disperses widely in the temperate south-east Atlantic and Indian Oceans, mainly at 30–50°S (Brooke 2004, Camphuysen 2007, Onley & Scofield 2007) with some reaching Antarctic waters (Montalti *et al.* 1999). The main pelagic distribution in the Atlantic is around southern Africa, where it typically occurs in oceanic waters and over the shelf edge (Camphuysen & van der Meer 2000, Camphuysen 2007). It is rare in the south-west Atlantic (Tickell & Woods 1972, Brown *et al.* 1975, Thurston 1982, Brooke 2004, Bugoni 2006, Onley & Scofield 2007).

Data on the species' occurrence in the south-west Atlantic are scarce, with scattered records for southern Brazil (Harris & Hansen 1974, Bugoni 2006), Argentine waters, the Falklands and South Georgia (Tickell & Wood 1972, Brown *et al.* 1975, Thurston 1982, Curtis 1994, Mazar Barnett & Pearman 2001, White *et al.* 2002, Chebez 2009). Some authors have highlighted the difficulties of identifying *P. macroptera*, especially vs. Kerguelen Petrel *Lugensa brevirostris*, so undocumented records should be treated cautiously, especially south of the polar front (cf. Mazar Barnett & Pearman 2001, Chebez 2009). Favero & Silva Rodríguez (2005) erroneously quoted Veit (1995) as mentioning *P. macroptera* as being a recurrent species at pelagic seabird assemblages in Argentine waters. However, the species mentioned by Veit was Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* and he found *P. macroptera* to be rare (R. Veit pers. comm.). Confusion probably originated through use of the Spanish name 'Petrel Pardo', which is applied to several species, including *Puffinus gravis* and *Pterodroma macroptera*.

*P. macroptera* was included in the Uruguayan avifauna by Cuello (1975) based on a specimen from La Floresta, dpto. Canelones, in July 1973, which Escalante (1980) reidentified as *Lugensa brevirostris*. Here we report the first documented records of *P. macroptera* in